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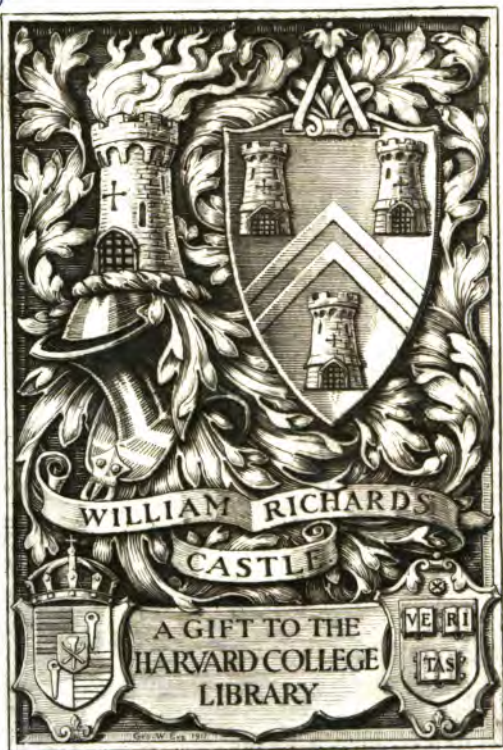
# POEMS OF THE UNKNOWN OWN WAY.



SIDNEY ROYSE  
LYSAGHT

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*Implicate*







**POEMS**  
**OF**  
**THE UNKNOWN WAY**



Poems  
of  
The Unknown Way

BY  
SIDNEY ROYSE LYSAGHT

London  
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# THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

**B**



## TO MY COMRADES

*You, who once dreamed on earth to make your  
mark*

*And kindle beacons where its ways were dark ;  
To whom, for the world that had no need of  
you,*

*It once had seemed a little thing to die ;  
Who gave the world your best, and in return  
No honour won and no reward could earn !*

*Sad Comrade ! we were shipmates in one  
crew,—*

*Somewhere we sailed together, you and I.*



#### 4 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

*O you of little faith, the promised heir  
Of life eternal, mourning days that were ;  
You, who to lift up one beloved head  
Out of the dust and feel one presence nigh,—  
To make again one vanished summer live,  
Your birthright of eternal life would give !  
I also murmur, " Give me back my dead !"  
The comrade of your unbelief am I.*

*You, against whom all fates have been arrayed ;  
Who heard the voice of God and disobeyed ;  
Who, reckless and with all your battles lost,  
Went forth again another chance to try ;  
Who, fighting desperate odds yet fought to win,  
And sinning bore the burden of your sin !  
We have been on the same rough ocean tossed,  
And served the same wild captain, you and I.*

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 5

*You, who desired no laurel of the race  
But the approval of one absent face ;  
For whom has earth no home, no place of rest  
Save in the bosom where you may not lie ;  
Beggared of all but Love's immortal right,  
Still for the sake of one you lost to fight !  
Oh, we have met upon the unknown quest  
And watched the stars together, you and I !*

*O wanderer, if at last your ship should find  
Home, and the sheltered havens left behind,  
I shall be with you in that merry crew  
Under the same old flag we used to fly ;  
But, if at last, of every promise shorn,  
With leaking timbers and with canvas torn,  
Still for the pride of seamanship sail you,—  
There also, in your chartless ship, sail I.*

## OUTWARD BOUND

DOWN the horizons, ring by ring,  
Over the windy seas we swing :  
    We are away for Eldorado,—  
Up in the bows the sailors sing.

For many a day the wind was fair ;  
We passed to the south of Finisterre ;  
    We heard the chimes of the bells of Lisbon  
Blown over-sea on the evening air.

We crossed the plains of the old sea-wars,  
And old-world harbours with crowded spars ;  
    And over the vales of Andalusia  
Fell the night and arose the stars.

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 7

And, sailing by sea-ways old, we came  
To many a coast of ancient fame,  
Where every isle has a golden story,  
And every haven a golden name.

But bells beyond the horizon rung,  
And stars grown old when the world was young,  
Called us away to the unknown seas  
Of the isles un-named and the songs unsung.

The haven's rest and the comrades kind,  
And the maidens merry we leave behind :  
We are away for Eldorado,  
Our dreams to seek and our lost to find.

Wilder each morn the west wind blows,  
Softer each night the starlight glows :  
We are away for Eldorado,  
Over the sea that no man knows.

## THE SEA PLAINS

It was evening, and we came to the seas where  
the south wind sleeps ;

And the skies were of softer bloom than  
those we had seen of old.

The glimmering plains of the sea to wider  
horizons rolled :

Great stars were watching in darker and lonelier  
deeps.

Late in the afternoon the shafts of the sunlight  
smote

The clouds to a mystic change, as with  
touch of enchanter's rods ;

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 9

And at twilight and at night strange shapes,  
as in dreams of gods,  
Phantasmal, stood on the sea, or wandered in  
tracts remote.

On amber skies to northward the dark sea-  
forests gloomed ;  
Strange knights on unknown quests were  
out on the golden plains ;  
A sorceress, by the sun-gates, spun woofs  
of crimson skeins ;  
Over the south horizon a fleet of galleons  
loomed.

And a cloud on the eastern sky, fold on  
billowy fold  
Built to a dome of rose, stood out of the  
dark sea-blue ;

10 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

And thunder out of it came, and lightning  
threaded it through,  
Crowning its dome with fire and flashing its  
rose with gold.

And now in the light of the moon, and now in  
the light of the stars,  
A sound as of tired wings high over the top-  
mast stirred.  
And lo! when the moon was set and the  
stars were hidden, we heard  
The cannon of long-fought fields, the murmur  
of old sea-wars.

Where doth our venture lead? Oh, it's south-  
ward still we go!  
It was evening,—and we passed from the  
seas where the south winds sleep.

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 11

And under the bows at night the waves  
began to leap ;  
And 'twas morning, and we came to the seas  
where the south winds blow.



## MIDNIGHT

WE heard the lonely note of our ship's bell  
Sounding the hour at night on quiet waters.  
The watchman cried, " All's well,—the lights  
are burning !"  
Over that dark and silent sea, " All's well !"  
The dipping bows swung to the long sea-  
rhythm ;  
The masts against the starlight rose and fell.  
  
And in the bows we lay  
And listened to the waters ;  
And long we watched the starlight and the  
realms

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 13

Of silver silence in the Milky Way,  
And magic isles of the Magellan clouds.  
The wind sang soft amid the shrouds,—  
The wind and water sounded far away.

## THE UNEXPRESSED

EARTH'S voices tremble with the unexpressed,—

*That was some former life's forgotten word  
That o'er the waters in the night wind  
stirred !—*

And dreams untold and secrets never guessed.

They give us clues, but keep from us the rest,—

*The sweetest notes of wind and wave and bird  
Tell us of songs that none have ever heard,—*

And send us forth upon an unknown quest.

They keep their secrets: bird and wave and  
breeze

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 15

Whisper each other's, but withhold their own.  
The evening wind at home among the trees  
Sings of the wandering waves of oceans  
lone ;  
And here the waves of the uncharted seas  
Murmur the wind's familiar woodland tone.

## STORM

FOAM-STRICKEN, spray-lashed, black to the  
edge of the farthest horizon,—

Black in the noon, hard pressed, hurled back-  
ward, hurled downward, on-goaded,—

The sea-hosts stricken, unvanquished, uplifted  
in fury stupendous,

Flee from the strong wild west ; and the voice  
of the wind-maddened waves howls

Back to the trumpeting wind. An albatross,  
wheeling in circles,

Sails with a wing to the clouds and a wing to  
the touch of the billow,

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 17

Glad in the tumult's midst. And a day and a  
night and a morrow  
The conqueror hunts in his joy, and the routed  
untameable thunders.

## AFTER STORM

THE wind fell, and the waters, gathering slow,  
Swung to the primal rhythm of the deep,  
In grand procession and triumphal sweep,  
With undertones of night and ancient woe.  
A thousand miles of ocean eastward curled,  
And, lifting stately waves of midnight-blue,  
Green - crested where the sunlight flashed  
them through,  
Rolled onward to the swing of the rolling world.

## CALM

FAR down the world we found upon our quest  
The lonely cloisters of the ocean's rest.  
The great sea-rhythms move not here at all ;  
But silence, and the league-long rise and fall  
Of slumbering blue, and wings of eve and dawn,  
And silver paths across the midnight drawn ;  
Nor shadow falls, nor wind forever blows  
Over that immemorial repose.



## THE SECRET OF THE DEEPS

WE sailed by the old world's tideways, down  
through the long sea-lanes,  
Into the ends of the south, over horizons  
new ;  
Deeper the skies rose o'er us, and round us the  
ocean plains  
Were held in a lonelier silence and folded in  
softer blue.

There are no farther skies, no lonelier seas to  
seek,  
Never a bourne remoter for wandering sail  
to find.

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 21

But we hear no voice that is new,—the wind  
and the water speak  
As they spoke of old on the seas of the  
world we left behind.

The mystery eternal, that troubled the world of  
old,  
Here, in the midnight stillness, moves on the  
unknown deeps ;  
And here the ancient secret, that never to man  
was told,  
The rose of the morning treasures, the blue  
of the noonday keeps.

Haply, we think, the secret may be shown to  
us here and now,  
Far from the land's disquiet and the world's  
unresting crowds :

## 22 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

And near it seemed in the whisper of ripples  
    beneath the bow ;  
Half won, then lost, in the sighing of wind  
    at night in the shrouds.

When the sea began to reveal it, when its azure  
    almost gave  
The key, a wandering cloud stole it, bore it  
    afar.

And again we had all but read it in the track  
    of a star on the wave,  
And lo ! it was gone, aloof in the silence  
    beyond the star.

So passed we out of that ocean, as guests from  
    a dim-lit hall  
When the night is late, and the sound of the  
    music is heard no more,

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 23

And ghostly voices whisper, and soundless foot-  
steps fall,

Under the silent roof-tree, over the windy  
floor..

## A BROKEN CLUE

O WANDERER in the world's old ocean-ways,  
Sad for the Beauty which you cannot keep,—  
The light of golden days,  
The magic of the twilight on the deep,  
And night and shadowy shores and towns  
asleep !  
If but the comrade of your heart were near  
Your great regret to share,  
Your mutual loss should be your recompense;  
And Love's immortal art for you should  
find  
Songs of the hours you leave in passing  
hence,

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 25

And requiems of lost magnificence,  
Lovelier than any voice you leave behind.

If one were near,  
Then Heaven would be more homely, earth  
more dear.

If in your wandering you could touch one  
hand,

No longer would earth's unread riddle vex  
Your spirit, or the starry signs perplex:  
For you would feel where none may under-  
stand,

And in your dreams would hear  
The password of the gates of wonderland,  
And make the benediction all your own  
Of twilight fading on the lonely cliff,  
And read the ocean's azure hieroglyph,  
And catch the wave's primeval undertone.

## FAR SOUTH

THE far green shores amid the seas of gray,  
The stars above the land we used to know,  
We had forgotten,—'twas so far away,—  
We had forgotten,—'twas so long ago.  
Our lonely pilot was the wandering breeze  
Whose voice we heard at midnight in the  
shrouds ;  
We followed in the moon, o'er unknown  
seas,  
The pilgrimage of silver-hooded clouds ;  
With rolling mists we drifted, or we steered  
To lights that with the morning disappeared.

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 27

No sail, nor shore ; but once at flash of dawn,  
When farthest from the world we knew with-  
drawn,

We saw green peaks and towers of ice arise  
Against the wild-rose of Antarctic skies ;  
And, over violet seas, the Eastern glow  
Fell on an iceberg's wandering hills of snow.  
And, with the sunrise, pinnacles and spires  
And crags and headlands flashed in silver fires ;  
And crystal waters broke on silver shores,  
And filled its caves' reverberant corridors.  
But, with the coming of the full blue day,  
White, like a ship of ghosts, it passed away.  
And lonelier seemed our pathway than before,  
And farther off the undiscovered shore.



## A STAR

NIGHT after night you watch one star appear ;  
And in your heart those hours you enshrine  
When on our ocean path we see it shine.  
You tell me by what name men know it here,  
And call it yours and mine.

For you it makes those spaces, still and  
lone,  
Kinder,—the awe of the unfathomed less,  
And gives the infinite a homeliness ;  
As some familiar flower, in lands unknown,  
A wanderer's path may bless.

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 29

To me its gleam of tender radiance links

No Heaven with the earth we leave behind ;

But seems a light, o'er wastes of wave and  
wind,

That shows a wanderer, on a ship that sinks,

The shore he may not find.

## STORM ON THE SEA PLAINS

CLOUD summits, faery peaks of gold,

Rose in a sunlit chain.

The shadows of a thousand domes

Fell on the far sea plain.

And grander soared the mountain towers,

And darker in our track

Their shadows fell, and, suddenly,

The gold was smitten black.

In skies remote, through peaks and domes,

A distant thunder rolled :

A distant lightning upward shot,

And smote the black to gold.

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 31

The deep was filled with ghostly shapes,  
The wind with notes of doom ;  
And spectres of the old sea gods  
Moved round us in the gloom.

Like drums of an advancing host  
The roll of thunder came ;  
And on the blue-black crags of storm  
Glimmered the copper flame.

The earth we knew was far away :  
The cloudland was our world.  
We saw mad legions of the air  
Against each other hurled.

The bolts of chaos were unloosed,  
The guns of hell were rammed,  
In a war of the Infernal gods,—  
In a battle of the Damned.

32 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

And louder swelled the sounds of doom,  
And bluer ran the flash ;  
And domes and crags and pinnacles  
Fell inward with a crash.

And all was fall'n and shapeless wreck,  
Chaos and ruin loud,—  
A city of the dead on fire,  
Blurred in a rainy cloud.

Then, louder than the thunder, grew  
The rain's unceasing sound :  
In ruined heaps the city hissed,  
In flood the flames were drowned.

And all grew cold and desolate :  
The wind swept through the rain :  
No mark of that which had been dwelt  
On the lonely ocean plain.

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 33

Lost remnants of the cloudy host,  
Stricken and overcome,  
Fled down the east ; and thunders lone  
Rolled like a distant drum.

But, ere the setting of the sun,  
We saw the rain-cloud lift ;  
And far away in the northern sky  
Opened a silver rift.

And round the edges of the south  
To gold the silver grew,  
And in the spaces of the north  
Long lanes of evening-blue.

And flying storm-clouds, crested white,  
Shone o'er the seas afar ;  
And light of rose was in the west,  
And in the east a star.

D

## A HAVEN

SHIPS are anchored, sails are furled,  
Shore-lights in the dusk appear ;  
Faint, and far away, we hear  
Roaring sea-ways of the world.  
In the haven's sheltered walls  
Soft the starry silence falls ;  
Winds that drove us through the deep  
Touch us now as soft as sleep ;  
Waves that smote before are now  
Rippled whispers at the bow.  
Dim lights glimmer on the ships,  
Shadowy figures cross the decks,  
Golden flashing phosphor-specks

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 35

Sparkle where an oar blade dips.  
Large, above the steady spars,  
Shine the radiant southern stars ;  
Falls, from crystal heights of air,  
Sound of wings that sea-ward fare ;  
Inland, still and dark and lone,  
Night enfolds a land unknown.  
Weary wanderers may stay  
    Here awhile the unknown quest ;  
Seekers of the far-away  
    Here a little while may rest.



## A SILENT SHORE

THE solitude of shores by man unclaimed,  
Peaks of unventured mountains, streams unnamed,  
And forests unexplored, and paths unknown,  
Lie here around us,—still, and vast, and lone.  
No record of the years have they,—no song ;  
No tidings of unrest and right and wrong  
And hope and fear and love and death and  
birth,  
That weave the stormy story of the earth.  
But through the ages they have still pursued  
Primeval labours in their solitude ;

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 37

And through the silent centuries have won  
Secrets of beauty from the rain and sun ;  
And from the morning mists and evening dew  
Filled up their treasures of scent and hue.

Here have they wrought a thousand years to  
dower

With lovelier form the unbeholden flower,  
To hide the moonlight in a gem, or bring  
A subtler motion to an insect's wing,  
Or to a bird's song add a note that tells  
The joy that in their lonely labour dwells.  
Here have they striven, age by age, to write  
In things that perish, tidings infinite ;  
In things that change, the wonder that abides,  
The hope that beckons, and the love that hides.

## THE ISLANDS

WE thought no more of the morrow, we forgot  
the oath we swore,

And the hope of our great adventure, and  
the old-world griefs,—

For we saw the moonlight shining on the  
folds of silver reefs,

And we heard the wind in the palm-trees, and  
the song of an island shore.

In the calm of the ocean cloisters, ringed in  
the outer blue,

Were ours the windless havens of the flower-  
blue coral seas :

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 39

We wandered apart at noonday in the  
twilight of the trees,  
In the island rest enfolded, unburdened of all  
we knew.

Down to the sands of silver ran the long palm  
lanes :

Oh the vales of dark ovava, and the oleander  
glades !

Above our heads in lucent domes of inter-  
woven shades  
Blue belfries of convolvulus hung down from  
airy chains.

With chiefs, by the ovava tree, we drank of the  
kava bowl ;

We lay us down in the starlight under  
oleander boughs :

40 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

The sleep-touch of the island maids was soft  
upon our brows,—  
Through winding ways of hidden life their  
dream-song stole.

Oh ! why may we stay not here and forget the  
unknown quest ?

Why were we born to decide between the  
good and the ill ?

Why were we born to begin a task we may  
ne'er fulfil ?

Oh ! why were we born to love with a love  
that brings no rest ?

We passed by the graves of the island kings,  
and the trees at the graves ;

We stood beneath the ghost-trees,—soft the  
night wind stirred ;

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 41

And of strange forgotten sorrows in voices  
far we heard ;  
And amid the ghost-trees' whisper was the  
murmur of northern waves.

Old spells were cast about us, and the magic  
of old decrees :

We cannot turn from our future, we cannot  
hide from our past ;

For us the way is onward, and we gathered  
about the mast,

And we sailed away in the dawn from the isles  
of the flower-blue seas.

## DREAMS

DREAMS lead us on. We find on sea or land  
No morn so glad, no stars in Heaven so fair  
As those we dreamed. Over a lonelier  
deep  
They beckon us, and whisper in our sleep  
A memory of things that never were.

Dreams lead us on. We know not what  
strange hand  
Sowed them, or what fair presence on the sea  
Passed and left dreams behind it, wild  
and sweet,  
On lonely paths, as flowers sprung to greet  
The woodland footsteps of Persephone.

## DAY AND NIGHT

EVEN as some bird that, lovely in its passage,  
Folding its wings is lovelier in rest ;  
So passed the day that, folding wings of twilight,  
Broods on the wild-rose waters in the west.

We had been content to see no lonely splendour,  
Dreaming still of Heaven beyond the western  
gate,—  
But that the darkness robbed us of our day-  
dream,  
But that the night revealed to us our fate.



#### 44 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

Noonday is ours, and the dawn and the twilight.

Boundaries of sunshine, golden prison-bars  
Shelter us from Heaven. The shadow of the  
night's wing

Frees us, and leaves us lost among the stars.

## AN EXILE

HE made the whole wide earth a barrier  
Between them, and of sea and rain and wind  
And heights of whirling snow, a veil to blind  
His sight against the face he held most dear.  
He made far mountain lands and deserts drear  
A wall between him and the memories kind  
Of all that might have been, and left behind  
Her sweetness in another hemisphere.

But sometimes, far upon the lonely deep  
At midnight, when the stormy watch is o'er,

46 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

His arms enfold her as he falls asleep ;

And sometimes, when the light is growing  
dim

On winter evenings, she unbars the door,

And through the wide world wanders,  
seeking him.

## THE PENALTY OF LOVE

If Love should count you worthy, and should  
deign

One day to seek your door and be your guest,  
Pause! ere you draw the bolt and bid him  
rest,

If in your old content you would remain.

For not alone he enters: in his train

Are angels of the mists, the lonely quest,  
Dreams of the unfulfilled and unpossessed,  
And sorrow, and Life's immemorial pain.

He wakes desires you never may forget,

He shows you stars you never saw before,

## 48 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

He makes you share with him, for evermore,  
The burden of the world's divine regret.  
How wise were you to open not!—and yet,  
How poor if you should turn him from the  
door.

## MUSIC AT SEA

A THOUSAND miles of storm enfold our ship.

*List ! 'tis a woodland song of long ago,—*

*A spring-song of the paths we used to  
know.*

Night falls : we stagger in the cyclone's grip.

The ocean is a groan, the wind a whip ;

*That was the whisper of the south-west, low  
And sweet in meadows where the cowslips  
grow !*

And through the wilderness of seas we dip.

Seems in our ears far off the roll and sweep

Of rushing waters in this ocean lone.

E

50 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

She sings, and in the exile of the deep

Makes the old sweetness of the earth our own.

We see the kine in dewy fields asleep,

And hear the bees in cloistered gardens  
drone.

## THE SOUL OF THE WANDERER

O WANDERER, look deep into your soul

And ask what blessing you desire most !

Now when the stars that guided you are lost,  
And in the stormy deep you find no goal.

Would you the haven's rest, O wanderer ?

Rest from the conflict of the beating seas,  
Home and a sheltered garden and fair trees,  
And gentle winds that in the woodland stir ?

Would you the song of birds, the hum of bees,  
And far away the murmur of the shore ?

Nay, for if these were given to you, and  
more,



## 52 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

You would not long remain content with  
these.

Then would old dreams become to you a spur,  
And tell of distant quests and running seas,  
And lights of unknown ports at twilight  
glowing :

Then would you gladly give your woodland  
peace

To win the freedom of the wanderer,  
And feel the winds of the world about you  
blowing :

Then would you muse on all that you had lost ;  
Your garden boundaries would seem as walls  
Between you and the hope supreme, that calls  
Over the waters to the tempest-tossed.

Yet, should you find again the wild sea-  
track,

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 53

Whispers of woodland peace would call  
you back.

There is a weariness of sailing on  
Without a goal, a weariness of rest  
In haunts of peace, while there remains a  
quest

Unventured, or a battle still unwon.

You would not of the homeless ocean tire

If you could know your seeking had not  
failed,—

That every long watch kept, each storm out-  
sailed,

Should bring you nearer to your heart's desire ;

If you could see, beyond the dark and rough,  
Hope of the haven lights, of torn sails furled,  
And love that waited for you, dear enough  
To make your garden boundaries your world.

## THE LOST WORLD

VAST, we saw, when the sun was low,  
A trackless forest where none may roam ;  
But 'twas not so vast as a wood we know  
Across three fields from the house at home.

We saw the peaks of eternal snow,  
The summits that foot of man ne'er clomb ;  
But they're not so high as a hill we know  
At the lonely end of a moor at home.

Cities, we entered, with lights aglow  
On many a palace, many a dome ;  
But they're not so grand as a port we know  
When the ships come in from the sea at home.

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 55

For the seas grow narrow, the hills fall low,  
And the world is small when its bounds you  
roam.

But the wonderful world we used to know  
Is still out over the hills at home.

## THE UNEXPLORED

OUT of lonely seas we sailed

After dusk, and crossed the bar  
Ere the darkness wholly veiled

Haven shores and lands afar ;  
Ere the path of wild-rose light  
O'er the hills had faded quite,  
Or the shore-lights' golden rays  
Glowed across the water-ways.

Wonderlands of which we dreamed

Over the unventured seas  
Never more enchanted seemed,  
Never lovelier than these ;

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 57

These that, hidden till the dawn  
Now no boundary confines,  
Save where starry skies have drawn  
Silvery horizon lines.

There, between the veiled and shown,  
Wonders hidden are our own ;  
Forest voices whisper there  
Lore of days that never were ;  
Secrets vision hides we find  
Written in the undefined ;  
Revelations in the guessed,  
Treasures in the unpossessed.

Darker, over waters dark,  
Loom the shores ; and still remains,  
Here and there, a light to mark  
Ships along the haven lanes.

58 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

Softer, over ripples soft,  
Far away the sea-winds blow ;  
Fairer than the stars aloft  
Shine the stars in depths below.

Ah ! what seek we ? Even now,  
While we wonder, we endow  
All things near us and afar  
With the dreams that nowhere are :  
Reading into the unknown  
Hopes that we have long outgrown,  
Weaving into the unseen  
Tidings of the might-have-been.

Soon along the eastern rim  
Light shall steal, and silver mist  
Flash to rose, and uplands dim  
Wake in folds of amethyst.

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 59

Soon shall tidings twilight told,  
    Soon shall pathways starlight drew  
Vanish in the morning's gold,  
    Hide behind the noonday's blue.

Now, till morn, remain our own  
    Magic shores of old surmise,  
Peaks no morning can dethrone,  
    Lands that know no boundaries.  
There the unfulfilled abides ;  
    There the touch of night unbars  
Gates of ways that noonday hides,  
    Paths that reach beyond the stars.



## THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

IN the days of the old sea ventures, when the  
sail was spread for the quest,

There was in every ocean the hope of an  
unknown shore,—

Beyond the orient gateways a farther east to  
explore,

And ever a west unreached beyond the Isles of  
the west.

And their hearts grew great in the thought  
that the world in which they were born

Was wide as the heavens are wide and knew  
no limit or bound,

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 61

And that ever beyond the farthest a farther  
might still be found,  
Westward below the evening and eastward  
behind the morn.

Now we know our little earth, we have come  
to the end too soon  
Of the ways that were once so long, and the  
seas that were once so wide ;  
And the gulfs of space en-ring us, we are  
bounded on every side  
By the starry deeps of the night, and the path-  
less blue of the noon.

The way we took to the southward leads us  
again to the north,  
And the star that beckoned our quest is the  
same that calls our return.

## 62 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

Shall our hearts grow small with the truth  
that, of old, men perished to learn?  
Shall we call it a home or a prison, from which  
there is no way forth?

When man wins truth from the years, the loss  
with his dreams he pays;  
But in time the knowledge he won but leads  
again to a dream.  
And the wonder ever remains; and a mys-  
tery more supreme  
Than the distant promised of old, is hidden in  
homely ways.

For the spell of the unfound shore has gathered  
above our own;  
And the magic of old sea dreams is treasured  
in wayside flowers;

THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 63

And tidings of Love immortal are whispered  
from vanishing hours ;  
And the secret of unknown beauty trembles at  
heart of the known.

The music the world once heard we hear in a  
softer key ;  
And a meaning the old world missed  
awakens in ancient song ;  
And the dream that the old world dreamed  
the ages for us prolong  
In the sound of the wind, and the ripple of  
waves, and the call of the sea.

Too small have we found our home? But  
see ! though we reach the bars  
That close the ends of the earth, what  
wanderings wait us still :—

## 64 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

Always a journey left to the country over  
the hill,  
And in every heart a pathway that reaches  
beyond the stars.

## LOSS, OR GAIN?

Is then our venture all in vain,

Since we, who were bound for Eldorado,

Now were happy to sail one evening

Into our haven-home again ?

Since we who were vowed to the unknown  
quest

Dream but of shelter, seek but rest,

Ask no more than a seat at the hearth-side,

Out of the sea-wind, out of the rain ?

If it be ours to return one day,

How shall we greet them empty-handed ?

What shall we tell of the unknown country ?

F

## 66 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

How shall we chart the unknown way ?

What will they hold the tidings worth

Of shoreless seas at the ends of the earth ?

Whose are the treasures of gold and silver,  
Theirs who venture, or theirs who stay ?

They have triumphed where we have failed ;

They have obeyed where we revolted ;

Theirs the blessings of harvests tended,  
Ours the lashings of storms out-sailed.

Content were they with their destined lot :

We sought a greater and found it not.

They bowed their necks to the yoke and  
fattened :

We have wrestled with God, and God prevailed.

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

LONG, long ago

We looked out westward from our island  
shores

Across the unknown seas.

Piled clouds against the twilight were the  
doors

Of magic ocean-ways that washed the  
quays

Along the glimmering Hesperides ;

And, over long horizons far away,

We dreamed of whispering waves and dipping  
oars,



## 68 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

And starry lanes and silver corridors  
Of seas that round our Eldorado lay.

We saw the haven lights aglow  
On windy evenings, and we heard the sound  
Of sailors' voices as the anchor swung,—  
Songs that the old sea venturers had  
sung  
Ere yet they knew their little earth was  
round.

And every ship that stood with sails unfurled  
Away upon her voyage, to us seemed bound  
To shores of Eldorado still unfound,  
To wonderlands that lie beyond our world.

Where shall we find them? we have sought  
afar,  
And wandered long upon the chartless main.

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 69

Here, where they should have been, they no-  
where are :

There, where we saw them once, they still  
remain.

And would we find them, we again must  
find

Those paths of childhood whence, in storm  
and wind,

We watched old ships at twilight cross the  
bar,

And heard the sailors singing in the rain.

Not for these old illusions do we mourn,—

Not for the Isles of the enchanted seas ;

But for the birthright lost, the joy outworn,

The hope unrealised,—we mourn for these.

We could not choose but bow to Time's  
decrees :

## 70 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

No taking thought can make again our  
own

The wonder that has flown,  
Or re-assert our heavenly destinies.  
The wound that Time has dealt Time cannot  
heal ;

But leaves us faithless where we would be-  
lieve,  
Makes us unravel where we fain would weave,  
And numbs our spirits where they long to feel.

Still we sail on. The future we endow  
With all we lost, and, on the ocean lone,  
Another Eldorado seek we now :  
A land wherein is nothing strange or new,  
No dearer love, no flowers of fairer hue  
Than once we saw but could not make our  
own ;

## THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE 71

Far shores where still exist

The might-have-been, the lost, the unfulfilled,  
The work we planned but had not strength  
to build,

The love we looked upon but somewhere missed.

We know not what far leagues of sea divide us

From that far land, or whether we shall  
sleep

Ourselves at last beneath the lonely deep,  
Or find some star to guide us ;—  
Some star that haply on our childhood rose,  
Whose light shall lead us to that evening's close  
When on the darkening deck we keep once  
more

Our watch, and of a sudden in the breeze  
Find woodland scents and murmur of the trees,  
And hear the sailors singing of the shore.

72 THE UNDISCOVERED SHORE

Is the land near? Too oft the night has  
blessed

Our hearts with dreams for morning to  
dispel ;

And dawn too often gave us hope of rest

And haven, lost before the evening fell.

Is this the land? or but a cloud in the west?

The night falls, and the watchman cries,

“ All’s well ! ”

## A RITUAL



## A CONFESSION OF UNFAITH

*Creditis—Credimus*

YOU believe in Life Eternal, Heaven, and the  
Heavenly Host.

You believe in God the Father, God the Son,  
and Holy Ghost.

We have won no faith divine in paths of  
human joy and grief ;

We have sought for God and found not. Help,  
O God, our unbelief !



You believe in One Supreme, the One in Three,  
the Three in One :

We behold the myriad worlds, whose Gods may  
countless be or none.

You believe in one Designer, Maker of the  
Heaven and Earth,  
One who from immortal blossoms shook the  
golden seeds of birth.

We, a faithless generation, question, seeking for  
a sign,

"The Creator whence created? The Designer  
whose design?"

"Nay," you answer, "we are children, all  
unskilled to read his plan ;  
Yet from dust of earth he took us, in his  
likeness made he man."

"We are dust of earth," we cry ; "and, as the  
flower from the sod,  
Dreams arise in human hearts, and in man's  
likeness made he God."

You believe that all creation from the soul of  
God proceeds.

You believe the heart of man is evil. Ask you  
whence the seeds ?

You believe that we were fashioned perfect by  
our God, yet fell ;

In his scheme for Heaven destined, by our  
actions fit for Hell.

See what choice you set before us to believe  
that God designed

Both the evil and the good, and flung the  
burden on mankind ;

Or to hold that he was powerless to complete  
what he began,  
And in Earth proclaimed his failure, and his  
recklessness in Man.

If you find the Father's spirit in the triumph of  
the saint,  
May we trace not also thence our sin's  
hereditary taint ?

So the God who would and could not, or the  
God from whom was born  
The defect that damns his creatures, you may  
worship,—we must scorn.

You believe God suffered evil, leaving open  
gates of sin,  
That his faithful in resistance might to nobler  
stature win ;

And for those who were unfaithful, and  
dishonoured, and undone,  
Did he send on earth a Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
his only Son.

Who became a man among us, shared the  
burden of the poor,  
And the trial of the tempted, and was faithful  
to endure,

And despised and rejected by the world he  
loved so well,  
He was crucified and buried, and descended into  
Hell,

And ascended into Heaven, and before the  
throne above  
Stands the advocate of man, and holds the  
open door of Love.

We revere! The name belovéd, Christ the  
comrade and the friend,  
Lights our wandering footsteps also down the  
way that has no end.

Only that, while you believe he leads you to  
your Heavenly rest,  
We behold him, one beside us, toiling on the  
unknown quest :

Greatest of the Love-inspired since the labouring  
world began,  
Named by man the Son of God, who knew  
himself the son of Man.

You believe the trump of doom shall sound  
and wake the dead from sleep,  
Wake them to their day of judgment,—damned  
or pardoned, goats or sheep.

These in bliss eternal dwelling, those in torture  
    wracked and wrenched,  
Where their worm for ever dies not, and their  
    fire is not quenched.

Or was this dark faith your fathers'? You,  
    mayhap, but see them grope,  
Exiles of forgotten Love, and derelicts of  
    vanished Hope.

Not for us your faith that severs friend from  
    friend, and mate from mate,  
We believe that we are comrades, sharers of  
    one common fate.

If but half mankind be chosen, Heaven but  
    made for God's elect,  
Be it ours to choose damnation with the faithless  
    and the wrecked.

G

When in lonely grief you stand beside the  
grave of child or wife,  
You foresee divine reunion, you behold not  
Death but Life.

Not for you the sting of parting, you who  
dream again to greet,  
All the love your dear ones gave you, all that  
made their presence sweet.

Not for you to toll above your dead the mournful  
parting knell :  
Rather peals of joy to speed them, triumph  
songs of brave farewell.

Yet despite the faith that cheers you, when the  
sundering hour draws nigh,  
We have seen your hopeless anguish, we have  
heard your faithless cry.

Gleams of hope may light our darkness ; dreams  
may bring us back our dead,  
Whisper the beloved accents, lift again the  
golden head,—

Dreams that bring us little comfort, heavenly  
promises that lapse  
Into some remote It-may-be, into some forlorn  
Perhaps.

When the voice we love is silent, when the face  
we love is hid,  
When we hear the churchyard gravel strike  
against the coffin lid,

When we turn and leave our dearest,—leave  
them where the grave deflowers  
All that made their presence lovely, would to  
God your faith were ours !



All your human love we share in ; you in all  
our human grief :

Love unites us, creeds divide us. Help, O  
God, our unbelief !

## A GENERAL CONFESSION

WE, who wrought not or fought not for life,  
have awakened to the light ;

We are raised unto honour from the dust, and  
equipped for the fight ;

And the honour we have held as a burden, and  
the gift as a right.

In the front rank of life were we stationed,—  
the earth's pioneers ;

Earth's creatures behold us and obey,—we  
have seen not our peers,

No stronger to whom we must bow ; yet we  
cower in our fears.

We have turned us at noon from the task that  
at morn we begun ;

We have thrown down our arms upon the field  
that 'twas ours to have won ;

We have left undone those things that we  
ought to have done.

A watch was given us on earth, an outpost to  
guard ;

And the post we abandoned, the way to be  
kept we unbarred ;

We have failed in the trust we were given,—  
and we ask a reward.

Like weeds of the sea on the tideways of life  
are we tossed

'Twixt the good and the evil, 'twixt the service  
divine and its cost.

We have erred, we have strayed from the way  
like sheep that are lost.

We have laughed at the faiths and the fears of  
the days left behind,

And have fashioned new bonds for our souls  
while the old we unbind,

And, thinking we behold, in our blindness our  
children we blind.

We are faithless of life, and in creeds our un-  
faith do we hide ;

The world that our faith should unite with our  
creeds we divide ;

We have said, " I believe," and we knew in our  
hearts that we lied.

In God's holy Name the commandments of

Love do we break :

We have turned from our friend ; we have

tortured, we have burned at the stake ;

We have shamed God and man by the deeds

we have done for his sake.

Shall we think that the spirit shall be cleansed

by the lip that exalts ?

That the battle shall be won by the ranks of a

force when it halts,

Crying, " Spare Thou them, O God, which con-

fess their faults,

Restore Thou them that repent ? " as slaves

might implore

When they look on the lash, while 'twas ours

by our deeds to restore

The cause we abandoned, and the pride of the  
arms that we bore.

In our failure had been less dishonour had we  
borne it alone ;

But we fashion us a creed in our fear, bidding  
God to atone

For our shame in the cause we betray, and the  
trust we disown.

And we curse God and die ; or we call on the  
name of the Lord,

While a hope still remains to be ventured, and  
a deed to record

In the ranks of the faithful, who fight and who  
seek no reward.

The evening is near and the night wherein  
labour can none.

We have wasted the day, we have borne not  
the heat of the sun ;  
We have left undone those things which we  
ought to have done.

## A PSALM

*Venite, gaudium canamus !*

COME, sing the joy of Life !

Leave the doubters and despairers,

And, among the onward-farers,

Take our heritage as sharers

In the wonder and the strife,

And the glory and the sin.

Let no creed of man divide us

From the friend who stands beside us ;

Let us seek no gods to guide us

But the Love that all may win.



The Gods are dead and gone,  
As the seers of old who framed them,  
And the golden tongues that named them,  
And the cruel wits that maimed them ;  
And behold ! we stand alone  
Glad of birth, and without fear ;  
With the same far Heaven o'er us,  
And the unknown road before us,  
Toil, and slumber to restore us,  
Pain, and Love to give us cheer.

Seek we Earth to understand !  
Read the fruit-time and the sowing,  
And the winds of winter blowing,  
And the sunshine and the flowing  
Of the waters in the land.  
Love the heroes and their deeds ;  
Stand where comrades may require us ;

Let our country's honour fire us,  
And a woman's love inspire us !  
These are Faith : the rest were creeds.

If we Earth have understood,  
Trusted, asking not completeness,  
Known a comrade's help, the sweetness  
Of a girl's love, need we witness  
Beyond these that Life is good ?  
Love it well ! and comes a time,  
Though our Gods be all departed,  
We shall find us merry-hearted,  
Nearer Heaven than those who started,  
Scorning Earth, the upward climb.

## A LESSON

(FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS)

ERE the beginning and beyond the end,  
Whole, uncreated, in eternal change  
Renewed, and deathless in mortality,  
Life Is. The Heaven and Earth and all the  
stars,  
The Spheres beyond the reach of sight or  
dream,  
Are but as leaves that on the Tree of Life  
Bud and unfold, and drop about its roots  
To merge in verdure new ; as sentences  
Set and re-set from one great font of type ;

As passing changes rung on changeless bells ;  
As fountain-spray of an eternal spring  
That, falling, feeds the sources of its leap.  
In the beginning Heaven and Earth were made,  
And Heaven and Earth shall also pass away.  
Ere the beginning and beyond the end  
Life Is. And we who travel for a day  
Along the unknown road, in wonder wait :  
And Wisdom cries, " I know not anything !"  
And Faith beholds and sees that it is good.

Even as a seed that from the blossom falls  
And lies beneath the ground and waits its time  
In darkness, till the spring shall touch its sleep,  
And impulses of life from which it sprung  
Inspire its growth until at last it bear  
A blossom like to that from which it fell,—  
So fell, so grew, so blossomed our green Earth.

That which the Earth was once,—the shapeless  
mass,

The chaos blind, the homeless wilderness

Flung into darkness, was itself the seed

Won from eternal harvests ; in its slime

And protoplasmic heavings were astir

Ancestral memories, immortal dreams.

There in the unformed was the formed ; the  
lands,

The seas, and all that in them is were there.

There, in the elemental force, abode

The power of man who chained the elements

And made them serve his needs ; the art divine

That into marble breathes the breath of life

And links the centuries with song was there.

There was the soul of man, the good, the ill,

The doubt, the faith, the purpose and the  
love.

There was the seed ; and, as the seed that  
springs

To leaf and flower, in its bloom reveals  
The bloom from which it sprung, so read we  
now,

In life's unfoldings upon earth, the heart  
Of life triumphant ere the world began ;  
And know that we who come are born the heirs  
Of pain, and hope, and strife, and love supreme,  
That, ere they trembled through our mortal  
days,

Were, and when man has also passed away,  
Shall sow the unborn worlds with human  
dreams.

We wake and read the earth, and learn the law  
That shaped its growth : we trace the leaf and  
bloom

H

Up from the bursting bud : and lo ! blind forms  
Of being feeling toward the light, vile shapes  
Born of abysmal throes, confusions vast  
Of elemental strife in which the strong  
Devoured the weak and grew, till some new age  
Of spheric doom swung round with ice or fire  
And slaughtered and selected, and the few  
That bore the stress of change remained to rule  
And multiplied, until once more appeared  
Weaker and stronger, and the stronger rose  
And crushed the weaker and again were  
crushed ;

And in the end the outcome of the strife  
Was Man, who had dominion over all  
And preyed on all things, and the stronger man  
Trampled his weaker brother under foot,  
And, dominant on earth yet fearing death,  
Made creeds to shelter him and deities

Who bore his strife to heaven, where the gods  
Of stronger races conquered and in turn  
Were driven forth and others ruled supreme  
And burdened man with tasks, until at length  
In pride or scorn he rose against his gods,  
Which were his own desires and tyrannies  
Unfettered, or his own ideals enthroned ;  
And wrestling with God, the soul of man  
Beheld itself, and saw that with itself  
It wrestled, and that impulses divine  
Unwakened while his coarser fibres grew,  
Hidden within the seed from which he sprung,  
And now in Time's inevitable hour  
Uplifted, were astir within himself  
And sought new light. And fighting to fulfil  
An age-begotten fate, our human life  
Bore,—as a woman bears her child in pain,—  
Pity, and Love, and Justice ; and the pride



Of leadership no longer lay in men  
Who trod upon the helpless, but in men  
Who fought their fight ; and those knit thews  
of strength

Won by the earth in civil strife remained  
To shield the awakened Love. Yet, with the  
Love

Grew deeper sorrow, and with larger hopes  
Larger regrets, and with the tender care  
To shield the blossom, knowledge of the blight,  
The canker, and the storm that threatened it  
Beyond man's help. And still the blue of  
Heaven

That reigns above the flower is as far  
As that which rose above the buried seed.  
And Love beholding Death, hides troubled eyes :  
And Wisdom cries, " I know not anything : "  
And only Faith beholds that all is well.

## A PSALM

*Sit nobis templum*

OURS be the church not built with hands,  
Whose corners are the seas and lands ;  
Whose windows are the night and day,  
The rose of dawn, the evening gray ;  
Whose pillars soar through azure space  
To shadowy heights, and interlace  
In roofs that, past the silver bars  
Of moonlight, mingle with the stars.  
The mountains shall our altars raise ;  
Our cloisters hide in woodland ways ;  
And, in the rocks, each crystal rill

Our founts of Holy water fill.  
Processions of the years and hours  
Shall ever move beneath its towers ;  
And, down its echoing aisles, shall sweep  
Eternal anthems of the deep.  
But gleams shall evermore be shown  
Through distant doors, of paths unknown ;  
And round its walls shall evermore  
Come whispers of an unknown shore.

Be it our ritual to read  
In Life our Faith, in Truth our Creed.  
Let Fear its graven tables break,  
And Love our ten commandments make.  
Let us, when Heaven no light imparts,  
Our gospel seek in human hearts ;  
Our hymns of praise on children's lips ;  
In Beauty, our Apocalypse.

And let the burdens all must bear  
In silence, be our common prayer ;  
Let every flower that cleaves the sod  
Become to us a word of God ;  
And, lifting Heavenward Life's intent,  
Love be, itself, our Sacrament !

## A SECOND LESSON

(FROM THE APOCALYPSE)

A VISION held my spirit, and I saw  
The Heavens opened and the Tree of Life  
Enfolded by the Everlasting Hills.  
And o'er the hills for ever rolled away,  
And ever formed itself anew, the cloud  
Whose name is Death ; and on the hills the  
cloud  
Threw down its burden, and sent forth a  
stream  
Whose waters flowed beside the Tree of Life  
And nourished it. And over all I saw

The light whose name is Love ; and in that  
light

The tree put forth its blossoms. Then I heard,

Near and yet far away, a voice that broke

The silence of the Everlasting Hills,—

A voice whose sound was as a passing wind

Amid the branches of the Tree of Life,—

And knew that God had spoken and that man

Had heard. And lo ! before mine eyes arose

Ages of Earth remote, and in the midst

Man's Soul in likeness of a warrior armed. .

Alone he stood beside the Tree of Life,

And listened for the call that summoned him,

And lifted up his voice and cried aloud,

“Where are my Gods?” And through the

Tree of Life

There passed a mighty wind, that smote its

boughs

And struck its weaker blossoms to the ground ;  
And to the Soul of man the Unknown spake :  
“Look on thy Gods !” Then all that I had  
seen

Was hidden from my sight and in its stead  
I saw a vanished Heaven. All was vast,  
Dim, and phantasmal. Wilderness and vale,  
Mountains and torrents mingled with the clouds ;  
And o'er the wilderness there passed a sigh  
Of myriad wings ; and Angels of the Mists,  
And Shades of Dream, and Wisps of ancient  
Fear,

Whispered and fled. Anon I heard the roar  
Of battle, and the giants of the winds  
And the old upland Gods led forth the van  
Of elemental war against the race  
Of younger Gods, and all the mountain paths  
Flashed fire, and all the valleys roared in flood.

And in the warfare, standing with the old  
Against the new, the Soul of man arose,  
Godlike himself, astrain to prove his strength,  
Exultant in the fray, and pitiless,  
And unafraid and careless of the end.  
And for a thousand years, that seemed a day,  
Along the mountain wildernesses rolled  
The battle, and at last the older Gods  
Were driven forth. And afterwards I saw  
The Soul of man alone upon a hill  
Watching the far off citadel of Heaven  
Called Asgard, where the rulers overthrown  
Still lingered ; and the twilight of the Gods  
Fell on the lonely mountain, and he cried,  
“ How may I reach the city of my Gods  
That with them I may die ? ” And thus to  
man  
Spake the Eternal, “ Mortal are the Gods,



But thou immortal. They have done their  
part,

But thine is unfulfilled, and on the Earth  
Thou must be born again !” And so I knew  
An age of Earth was ended, and that man  
Had learned its lesson and had proved himself  
In conflict, and had knit his strength and won  
Stature and godlike scorn of death, but stood  
Still ignorant of life, a child unskilled  
To read Earth’s deeper meaning or behold  
His own high destiny.

A thousand years  
Went by me and I saw the Soul of man  
In likeness of a prophet stern and old.  
Alone he stood beneath the Tree of Life,  
And lifted up his voice and cried aloud,  
“Where is my God that I may worship him ?”

And through the Tree there passed a wind that  
shook

Music of unborn ages from its boughs,  
And to the Soul of man the Eternal spake,  
"Behold the Lord thy God!" And, suddenly,  
Another Heaven was opened and my eyes  
Were dazzled with the light. No shadow fell,  
No cloud was there, nor breath of wind disturbed

The golden calm. A throne was set on high,  
And round about it stood the heavenly host,—  
Ten thousand times ten thousand, angels bright  
With folded wings adoring,—and they cried,  
"Hosannah in the highest! King of Kings!  
And Lord of Lords!" Then, even at my feet,  
Opened between me and the heavenly host  
A bottomless abysm, whence arose  
Voices of woe and infinite despair,

And supplications vain, and shudderings  
Of fear, and shrieks of insane blasphemies,  
And mutterings of curses impotent.  
Below was utter darkness, but the star  
Called Lucifer, hung midway in the gulf  
And shot blue rays upon its walls, and  
showed  
Creatures like men, who hung upon its crags.  
I saw that some strove upward, inch by inch,  
With bleeding hands that grasped at jut and  
ledge,  
But never reached the verge ; and others stood  
Struggling together, and together fell  
Sheer to the unknown terror, cursing God.  
Into the pit infernal gazed man's Soul,  
Then on the throne ; and, while he paused,  
there came  
An angel bidding him arise and join

The heavenly choir : but, though he went, his  
eyes

Were still turned backward to that gulf of  
woe :—

And, while he sang amid the heavenly host,  
Wild cries were ever in his ears, that marred  
The golden concord ; and his heart was filled  
With ancient dreams and prophecies of change,  
And murmurs of rebellion.

And there fell

A change upon my vision, and I saw  
The throne no longer nor the heavenly host,  
But, where the golden radiance had been,  
A desert place in which the Soul of man  
Wandered forlorn, till in the wilderness  
A voice unheard amid the heavenly choir  
Fell on his ears, and the Eternal spake :—

"For thee is neither home nor resting-place  
In Heaven, but on Earth remains thy part  
Unfinished, and thy lesson still unlearned.  
Thy destiny is greater than thy dreams,  
Thou than thy Gods." So then I knew that  
man

Had looked upon the evil and the good,  
And framed the law and written the command  
Of righteousness, forgetful of the weak,  
And climbed towards Heaven ere yet the joy  
of Earth  
Had reached his spirit or his eyes had seen  
Its beauty.

And there passed another age.  
And once again I saw the Soul of man  
Stand by the Tree of Life. A youth, he  
seemed,

Noble of form, and on his brow he wore  
A poet's laurel. And I heard him say,  
"Where are the Gods whose deeds I sang on  
Earth?"

Then to the Soul of man the Eternal spake,  
"Behold thy Gods!" And suddenly I saw,  
High throned above the plains of Thessaly,  
Olympus. All its vast and crowning heights  
Shone radiant; but as waters of the sea  
Round island shores, the billows of the clouds  
Rolled at the foot of pinnacle and crag,  
And swept along the curves of upland vales  
In rippling tides of gold and foam of rose,  
And wrought a barrier between Heaven and  
Earth,  
Watched by the Hours. Upon the higher  
peaks  
In state apart communing, were enthroned

Zeus and the greater Gods ; the lesser Gods  
Dwelt in the forests and the vales remote  
That bordered on the wandering fields of cloud.  
In those celestial realms I saw that care  
Was banished and that no unlovely thing  
Or voice unsweet might enter. Stately forms  
Of radiant beauty trod the slopes and left  
A path of flowers where their footsteps fell,  
And thrilled the air with melody and touched  
The dream of mountain echoes in their speech.  
Here, welcomed by the Gods, the Soul of man  
Abode content, and saw his ancient dream  
Of beauty perfected, and learnt the songs  
Of love and wisdom, freed from mortal bonds.  
Yet after many days it seemed some want,  
Some rumour of a promise unfulfilled,  
Perplexed him ; and one night Mnemosyne  
Came while he slept and whispered in his ear ;

And when he woke he looked upon the stars  
That shone above Olympus, and, amazed,  
Beheld in them the same familiar stars  
Whose light he knew on Earth, but still  
remote

Nor nearer to the Heaven than the Earth.  
Then stirred within him distant memories  
Of woodland flowers and sunlit homes of men,  
And paths of starry light on rippled seas.  
And with the dawn he lifted up his voice  
And sang, and from their thrones upon the  
peaks,  
And from the misty vales the Gods drew near  
And listened wondering.

He sang of Earth  
And labour, of the toil of husbandmen,  
And rain on furrowed fields, and evening light  
On yellow cornlands, and of haven quays



And crowded masts, and worn sea-venturers  
Home faring from their quests ; he sang of war,  
The glory of the conflict and the deeds  
Of heroes ; and of peace and hope he sang,  
And destiny, and reverence for the Gods.  
But sweeter rose his voice the while he sang  
Our human bonds, the few and priceless years  
That make man's all, of death that gives the  
hours

Of human life a loveliness unknown  
Among immortals, and of sorrow and strife  
Amid whose darkness Love becomes a light  
Unseen in Heaven.

I saw that while he sang  
The Gods grew weary of their blessedness,  
And one by one went forth ; and, down the  
slopes  
Into the clouds that girt Olympus, passed,

Seeking for earthly wars and human loves.

And, when his song had ceased, Man stood  
alone

Beside the Tree of Life, and, in the breath  
That stirred its boughs, thus heard the voice of  
God :—

“Earth thou hast learned to love, and thou  
hast read

Her dream of beauty, but thou hast not learnt  
The secret of her sorrow. On the Earth  
Again thou must be born, and thus fulfil  
A nobler fate than falleth to thy Gods,  
Who dwell apart from pity and from death.”

Then in my vision passed a thousand years  
That seemed but as a day, and I beheld  
Another Heaven and another Earth.  
And at the door of Heaven the Soul of man

Paused, looking backward down the narrow way  
Whereby he came. Gentle he seemed and  
strong

And sorrowful, as one who bore the pain  
And burden of the great world's sins and tears  
And failures ; and forgetful of the load  
That lay upon him, though his feet were  
bruised

And on his brow was pressed a crown of  
thorns.

I saw him open wide, but enter not,  
The door of Heaven ; and through it streamed  
a light

Whose name is Faith, that on the wilderness  
Severing Earth and Heaven fell, and made  
A radiance on one steep and narrow way,  
While all around was dark.

Yet not on those

Who climbed that path and found the door of  
Heaven

Pondered the Soul of man, but on the crowds  
That lingered on the highways of the world,  
Glad in the sunshine, and on those who strove  
And stumbled in the darkness, seeing not  
The light that fell upon the narrow way.  
And while he pondered, out of Heaven there  
spake

A voice that bid him lay his burden down  
And enter into rest.

Then to that call  
I heard him answer, "Is the end fulfilled?  
What, then, of those who have not found the  
way?"

And out of Heaven again there spake a voice :  
"The door is open and the light of Faith  
Shines down the path for all to see who will ;

And those who turn away, loving too well  
The lights that rule the world, must follow  
these

Even to their setting, and with them be lost."

Then answered he, "Too narrow is the way,  
Nor is there hope for man in any Faith  
That severs race from race, and home from  
home,

And man from wife. Till Faith and Love are  
one

The world shall still be faithless." And again  
The voice from Heaven called him, and he cried,  
"I go among my brethren on the Earth  
To share their unbelief." And down a path,  
Rugged and dark, save that the light of Love  
Was round his footsteps, through the wilderness  
That severed Earth from Heaven, he went his  
way.

Then in my vision passed a thousand years  
Which seemed but as a day, and eagerly  
I waited looking for the Soul of man  
Once more to come, nor come as heretofore  
A wanderer in quest of vanished dreams,  
But confident as one who nears at last  
His home, and glad with tidings of a Faith  
That all the world may share.

And long it seemed

I waited, but he came not, and there reigned  
A silence in the everlasting hills.  
And through the branches of the Tree of  
Life

There passed a wind, and once again I heard  
The voice of the Eternal :—" Ask no more.  
The road must ever be an unknown road  
On which man fares, and this alone his faith,  
To love and labour asking not the end."

So passed the voice, and once again there  
reigned

A silence in the everlasting hills,  
And o'er the hills for ever rolled away,  
And ever formed itself anew, the cloud  
Whose name is Death, and on the cloud there  
fell

The wonder of the light whose name is Love ;  
And stretching far away, here lost in mist,  
Here in the light emerging, I beheld  
The unknown road.

Then from my dream I woke.  
And lo ! I stood in a familiar place  
At nightfall, and around me heard again  
Earth's woodland notes, and murmuring of the  
sea  
Borne on the south-west wind, and saw the  
lights

Aglow in homely windows, and the path  
That led me to the door of those I loved ;  
And o'er the darkening woodland, and beyond  
The dim horizon of the sea, arose  
The stars that shone upon the unknown way.



## A PSALM<sup>1</sup>

*Domus nostra in profundis !*

WORLD of our wakening ! home in the depths  
of the Infinite

Fallen to humanity ! O little sunlighted  
wanderer

In the vast spaces unknown and eternal and  
limitless !

We, too, have come in our turn to behold our  
inheritance.

So, while thou still hast pursued the old course  
of thy pilgrimage,

<sup>1</sup> Revised from verses which originally appeared in a volume called *A Modern Ideal*, now out of print and not to be republished.

Others have come and have gone—have beheld  
and inherited,  
Made of thy waters a path and a home in thy  
meadowlands,  
Gathered to toil in the dawn and to rest in the  
darkening,  
Fought and kept watch on thee. Now is the  
day, soon the night cometh.  
This is our watch, we have come to relieve the  
aweary ones.

Lo! we arise and look forth and consider our  
dwelling-place :—  
Homely and intimate round us the paths of  
our wandering,  
Leading afar till they merge in the mists of the  
Infinite.

Life, the familiar, revealing through change and  
mortality,

Tidings immortal, and under the simple and  
visible

Ever suggesting a secret beyond that is fathom-  
less.

Everything wondrous, suggestive, with mean-  
ing inborn in it,

Everything stamped with the mark of eternal  
significance.

This is our watch, we have come to relieve the  
awearry ones,

Come to keep watch on the earth and guard  
our inheritance,

Hold it in trust for the future, and cherish in-  
volute

All that our fathers of old time have won and  
bequeathed to us.

Present and future and past, we behold our  
inheritance.

Into the past we return ; we can roam at our  
will through it,

Making its moments our own :—when we see  
in our wandering

Mortals who strive in the wars of the gods  
around Ilium,—

Fishermen mending their nets by the borders  
of Galilee,—

Wind-beaten mariners sailing beyond the Hes-  
perides,—

Are we not there with them still, are they not in  
the midst of us,

Striving, and hoping, and loving, and sinning,  
and sorrowing ?

Are we not venturing still on the paths they  
begun for us ?

Legends of fairyland, tales of the morn of  
humanity ;

Night on the plains of the past, and old watch-  
fires glimmering ;

Tidings of heroes, of men at their posts dying  
silently ;

Voices uplifted whose ring faileth not through  
the centuries ;

Songs of the ages, the music of life and its  
interludes,

Even the silence of sleep, and of death, and  
forgetfulness ;

Records of faithlessness, wrong, and oppres-  
sion, and infamy,

Weariness, suffering, ignorance, waste of  
humanity ;

Whispers of struggles unknown, of the brave  
and defeated ones ;

Words of the story divine, of the love and self-  
sacrifice,

Help for the poor and oppressed, and good  
news for the sorrowful ;

Dayspring of Liberty, age after age ever brighten-  
ing,

Conquering darkness, as shafts of the sunrise  
strike heavenward,

Thrown from one cloud to another. Oh, this  
has been given us :

Even to look through the past on the life of  
humanity,

Growing from better to better, and learn that  
'tis well with us ;

Learn that they watched not in vain who re-  
ceived not the recompense ;

Learn that they fought not in vain who beheld  
not the victory ;

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Learn that 'tis well, and the law of man's life  
is development.

So have our forefathers watched for us, fought  
for us, hoped for us,

Stored for us knowledge, and fashioned us arts,  
and made laws for us,

Given their love, writ in song or engraven in  
stone for us,

Finished their labour, and left it to us for an  
heritage.

O green earth ! little heart of warm life ! little  
wanderer

In the vast spaces unknown and eternal and  
fathomless !

O little sunlighted wanderer in the wide wilder-  
ness !

Thou art our home ! We look round and consider our dwelling-place ;  
Ponder the pictures of life, and mutation, and wakefulness,  
Gathered in one little world, the strange tidings of destiny  
Told by an hour of time. Of thy dust we are fashioned,  
Nursed in thy shelter, and no other home may we look upon,  
Yet there is something we miss which we sought in thee everywhere,  
Something we miss which we dreamed about : thou art not all to us.  
Deep in our souls there are whispers of voices mysterious,  
Promise of something unfound, of labour that waits for us,



Shores of new life to discover, far fields to be  
harvested,  
New homes to find and to fashion, and old love  
to take with us ;  
Making thee seem little earth, little sunlighted  
wanderer,  
Only the home of our childhood, the bond of  
our brotherhood,  
Over the threshold of which we shall pass,  
when the night cometh,  
Seeking the morning afar and our greater inheritance.

Life, the grand labour of love, never doubteth  
nor tarrieth :  
Never a cease in the heart beat, no pausing nor  
wearying

Save in the spirit of man. We are filled with  
the mystery,

Touched with the wonder of life and the mean-  
ing in everything ;

Ponder the flowers of the field and consider  
their loveliness ;

Take up the bones of the mammoth and muse  
their antiquity ;

Feel the sweet influence reaching us out of the  
Pleiades ;

Stand by the breaking of seas till their storm  
grows a part of us ;

Enter the cities of man and are lost in the  
multitude :

Lie in the meadows at noon by the side of a  
rivulet,

Watching the stir of the ripples among the  
forget-me-nots ;

Look on the earth and behold through the  
length and the breadth of it,  
Law everlasting and matter for ever obedient ;  
Everything doing its work in its place growing  
beautiful,—  
Strength in the garment of tenderness, love  
become visible ;  
Everything holding a meaning, some secret at  
heart of it,  
Everything stamped with the mark of eternal  
significance.

So we behold in the vanishing hours of  
humanity  
Homely beginnings of pathways whose ends  
are invisible :  
Labour we cannot complete, and design never  
perfected ;

Purpose, and earnest resolve, and divine possibility ;

Pride and rebellion of spirit, and honour, and steadfastness ;

Strength to resist, and the power of sublime disobedience,

Power to disobey law, and inherit the punishment ;

Love for whose sake it would seem life itself had been given us,

Rather than love for the life's sake ; and sorrow and sacrifice,

Speaking the beauty of life in the midst of mortality.

Lo ! we are brothers,—the earth the first home of our brotherhood !

Lo ! we are pilgrims,—and this is our first day  
of journeying !

Learners of life,—and the earth our first school  
in the universe !

Lovers are we,—and the earth is our earliest  
trysting place !

Fighters for God,—and the earth is the first of  
our battlefields !

Here we are set as a watch in the world of our  
wakening.

This is our watch : we have come to relieve the  
awearry ones !

We have not looked on our Captain, yet think  
we shall look on him ;

Think he is watching himself even now in the  
midst of us.

Danger we know there is,—ay, and a good  
thing to guard from it.

What is beyond we know not ; but we feel  
there is victory ;

Know that we now can be true, and undaunted,  
and resolute,

Keeping hearts strong against evil and warm  
to each other ;

Who stand as a watch on the earth, on the  
shores of the Infinite,

Waiting the time when we also shall join the  
departed ones.

## A LITANY OF PEACE AND WAR

### I

THOU, who while still the nations were unfreed,  
Called forth our race, and in the hour of need  
United us, and gave us strength to lead  
Through paths of darkness toward the  
rising sun;—

Now while the cause for which our fathers died  
Unmoves us, while we hear on every side  
Uncertain voices, and our ranks divide,  
Lead us, good Lord, and make the people  
one !

From creeds that sever us, from fears that  
bind,

From promise of a goal which some may find,  
While some are in the darkness left behind,

Turn us ; let all behold the light, or none !

But, knit by burdens that we all may bear,

Let us behold one hope or one despair ;

To victory, or defeat which all may share,

Lead us, good Lord, and make the people  
one !

Guide us to read our nobler fate's command :

Still in the service of our native land

To serve the world, and in the forefront  
stand

While there are wrongs to right or deeds  
undone.



And when the enemy is at the gate,  
Let no divided counsels in the state  
Unnerve our strength, nor let us hesitate  
    To draw the sword that made our fathers  
        one.

But, when in freedom's place we set the lust  
Of power and dominion, quick to thrust  
The weak aside, when in a cause unjust  
    We draw the sword wherewith our fathers  
        won

Our ancient greatness, and the clamorous cry  
War when there is no war, and with a lie  
Flatter the land for which they dare not  
    die,—  
    Turn us, good Lord, and make the people  
        one!

## II

From bonds of peace wherein there is no  
peace,

From ease that sows corruption and disease,  
From increase paid for in the soul's decrease,  
Good Lord deliver us, and send us war !

When turning from the paths our fathers trod,  
Scorning their Ruler and his broken rod,  
We set up in his place the Belly-god,  
And hear not in the midst of civil jar

The song of freedom,—when our nation's  
creed

Is but the trumpet of the common greed,  
Nor cause remains in which we dare to bleed,  
Good Lord deliver us, and send us war !

Thou, who didst breathe into our souls the  
breath

Of life, send now the sword that severeth !  
Send battle in our midst and sudden death ;  
Threaten our homes with ruin and unbar

The gates that hide our treasures, that our  
need

May wake our strength, and men may rise to  
lead

Whom we may follow, till our souls are freed  
From shame and fear, and love that fled afar

Again may seek us, and a common foe  
Reknit old comradeship, and common woe  
Rebuild the common weal. Strike ! for thy  
blow

Of battle heals where peace had left a scar.

Ere the doom falls and it shall be too late  
Show us, good Lord, the foe within the gate ;  
Show us through sacrifice our nobler fate,  
And in the darkness of our night, a star.

But from that hour accurséd when we cry  
Peace ! when there is no peace, and with a lie  
Flatter the land for which we dare not die,  
Good Lord deliver us, and send us war !

## III

They were our best who answered to the call ;  
They were our best who were the first to fall ;  
Nor vainly did they die, for through us all  
Their spirit passed, and quickened a new  
birth.

But, that the strength they died to reunite  
May bless the land, and that its ancient might  
Be strong to serve as it was strong to smite,—  
Spare us, good Lord, and send Thy peace on  
earth !

We have beheld how suffering and strife  
Strike like the tempest on the tree of life,  
How war is in Thy hand the pruning knife  
That cuts away the branch of little worth ;

But the same blasts that strike the tree, and  
doom  
The rotten branch, shake down the tender  
bloom ;  
And Love must still keep watch beside a  
tomb,  
Until Thou send again Thy peace on earth.

Not as the slave beneath his punishment  
Cry we for mercy, though our strength be spent,  
And all the land with sword and famine rent,  
And where the harvest ripened there is  
dearth.

For never cry of hearts too faint to dare  
Yet reached Thy throne. But spare Thy  
people, spare  
The land whose sacrifice has been its prayer,  
And send, good Lord, Thy peace again on  
earth !

Spare us that we may see, through clouds  
dispelled,  
A foe forgiven and a cause upheld,  
That joy may ring through lands where  
mourning knelled,

L

And homes long dark may know the sound  
of mirth.

And that our buried enmity may sow  
The harvest of the world, and common woe  
Reknit the common weal of friend and foe,—  
Spare us, good Lord, and send Thy peace  
on earth !

## AN EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS

LAMELY ye go on your way! Between two  
opinions ye halt,  
Fearing to trust or deny, and making a creed  
of your doubts ;  
Seeing two pictures of life and living untrue to  
them both.

Look on your pictures in turn! Ponder this  
reading of Life !

A world among worlds unknown, a pause in  
the infinite blue,



Man looking forth and around, knowing not  
whence he has come

Nor what the beginning nor end nor intent of  
the life he perceives.

A little while given for labour, a little while  
given for love,

A little while given to follow the windings of  
wandering ways,

And then the eternal farewell. Ever the ebb  
and the flow,

Ever the growth from decay, ever the flower  
from the seed,

Ever the change called Death ; but never  
beginning nor end.

Nor finds he has faith in the future, who knows  
that an infinite past

Has dealt its eternal mutations to fashion the  
life he beholds.

Here happier currents may mingle, here stormier  
forces conflict,

Here systems and worlds may blossom, here  
regions celestial decay ;

But nought can be added or cancelled in that  
which already is whole.

And he knows that the world shall grow old  
and humanity fade from its face,

And its matter be moulded anew, though its  
forces have gathered no strength

Nor stored any labour or truth from the boot-  
less existence of man ;

Nor yet any ultimate good, no triumph un-  
reached in the past

Be won by his impotent toil ; nor the death of  
a race or a world

Uplift the Creation one step, or lighten the  
burden of pain.

And he seeth his hope as a lie, and the purpose  
that speaks in his soul

As the sport of the purpose supreme, whose  
law is the ebb and the flow ;

And the purpose attained in a life, the develop-  
ment won in an age,

As landmarks on cliffs that shall crumble, as  
pathways of foam on the sea,

Such is the first of your pictures,—such the  
pageant of change !

And this is the other :—

The Earth and the  
Heaven, the known and unknown ;  
Earth in whose sheltering bosom a seed from  
the flower of life  
Fell from afar and unfolded ;—the deathless in  
mortal expressed,

The vast in the finite and homely, in Time the  
Eternal ; and man

Learning in simple beginnings the tidings of  
infinite aims.

He sees how the light in him grew, how the  
forces within him were matched

With forces without and prevailed, till he sprang  
from the slave to the heir,

From the brute to the man. And he dreams :  
he dreams of achievements afar,

Of a stake in a grander adventure, of deeds in  
a mightier cause :

And he strives with the forces of death, with  
the retrograde, blind, and corrupt,

And wounded and weary and doubting, still  
hears in the darkness a voice

That bids him endure to the end : and he holds  
to the good, and the wrong

Is a quickening breath, a kindling wind on the  
fires of his soul,  
And his pain a sword in his hand when corruption is near to the gates :  
And suffering wakens his pity, and sacrifice  
hallows his love,  
And his loss is his gain, and the light that lifted  
the man from the brute  
The godlike reveals in the man.

Now reads he the lesson of Time,—  
That faith in To-morrow's advance is the breath  
of the life of To-day.  
And he knows that his way is onward, his  
birthright to share in the hope  
And burden of life itself, to cherish its promise  
on earth,  
And, ever beholding the better and seeking the  
greater, to serve

A purpose unseen whose design in its glory  
complete shall reveal  
His labour engraven, his dreams interwoven,  
his sorrow inwrought,  
And fold in its rest his desire, and light with  
its beauty his love.

These, O Laodiceans, these are the pictures  
you make !  
These your readings of life,—these twain ; and  
doubting you stand  
Fearing between them to choose, and living  
untrue to them both.

If in the first is the truth, why should a flatter  
ing dream

Hold you in servitude? Can you not look on  
your fate unafraid?

Knowing your now is your all and sure that  
no purpose unseen

Is served by your labour, no treasure eternal  
laid up in your love,

Why should you palter with Heaven? Were  
it not wise to secure

Treasure on earth? And why should to-  
morrow's advance

Darken the light of your day? Yours is the  
Here and the Now :

Yours to fulfil the desires whose fountains are  
fed from the earth :

Yours to unfold in your season as flowers that  
win from the light

The beauty of vanishing moments, and even as  
flowers to die.

So were you true to yourselves, and true to  
that picture of life

That offers no other reward than a share of  
the joy and the pain,

A gleam of the beauty, a dream of the wonder,  
and rest at the end.

So were you worthy of life: but if, having  
looked upon truth,

You cling to a flattering dream, you stand as  
fools in your shame ;

And, claiming the Kingdom of Heaven and life  
everlasting, are made

The sport of decay, as the king who heard the  
voice of the crowd

Name him immortal, a god, while the worms  
were at work in his heart.

But no, O Laodiceans ! this contenteth you not.



Hope of a loftier fate than to live as the flowers  
of the field

And even as the flowers to die, hides in your  
spirit's unrest ;

And voices call from afar, the voices of love  
that you missed,

Of dreams earth never fulfils. So once again  
do you turn

And look at your other picture. Gladly?  
Eagerly? Nay !

Are your possessions on earth so great that ye  
faltering stand,

Sad at the price to be paid by him who seeketh  
his own

Beyond the horizons of time. If it be man's  
to serve

A Purpose unseen, whose design in its glory  
complete shall reveal

His labour engraven, his dreams interwoven,  
his sorrow inwrought,—

If in the Infinite Aim your vanishing moments  
are stored,

And folded for ever the hope that you lost and  
the love that you missed,

What have the treasures of Time to measure  
with these? and you!

Born to a fate sublime, made one with a  
Purpose Supreme,

Heirs of the infinite joy, of the measureless  
kingdoms of life,—

You should arise in your strength, and shout  
in your gladness, and sing

The glory of life and death, the glory of Earth  
and Heaven,

The glory of God and man. But no! Your  
voices are mute;

Ye are neither hot nor cold. Between two  
opinions ye halt,  
Fearing to trust or deny, and making a creed  
of your doubts ;  
Seeing two pictures of life and living untrue to  
them both.

## A HYMN

*Non preces nobis communes*

THOUGH we have found no common  
prayer,

Nor creed that all the world may share,

The joy of Earth unites our days

And wins from man one voice of praise.

For, from the very life of things,

A constant fount of gladness springs ;

A beauty, making all the Earth

One heart in joy, one song in mirth,—

One voice that o'er our severed aims

Our faith in Life itself proclaims.

No fear of Death can cloud our fate  
Save when we seek to separate  
From Life our lives, and stand alone  
In self fulfilled, as seed unsown.  
No fear of Death is ours who know  
That in the very life we sow  
We are, and in the links we bind  
With other life our own we find.

In sharing life 'tis ours to live :  
Our immortality abides  
Beyond the gates of self, and hides  
Our treasure in the thing we give.  
And, from our tribute service won,  
The hidden springs of life are fed ;  
And, through our joy, its fountain-  
head  
Sings in the rills that overrun.

Life, in eternal youth renewed,  
Unfolds, and is itself the good.  
Its waters sink to reappear,  
Filtered through Time, in fountains clear ;  
Free from the former wrong or stain  
Its flowers, its worlds, are born again.  
And never jar of fear or wrong  
Can touch the gladness of its song ;  
Nor death deface, nor envy steal  
One dewdrop from its commonweal ;  
Nor dim its beauty, nor undo  
Its rose of morn, its noonday blue.

Life hides no secret, gives no key,  
But bids us in its labours share.  
Enough, that life is everywhere,  
Enough, that part of it are we.  
Enough, that everywhere we read

M

The sower's joy, the quickening fire,  
That kindles in to-day's desire  
To-morrow's birth. The unknown seed  
Here grows to blossoms in the sun,  
And here to man ; and in them both  
The founts of Love are springs of growth,  
And in their gladness they are one.

## A CONFESSION OF HOPE

*Finis adest vitae : lacrimae mortalibus*

**MORTALS** with our moments numbered, captives  
with our confines set,—  
**We**, whose children shall forget us, as our  
fathers we forget ;—

**We**, Earth's chance-begotten creatures, grasping  
all that Earth can give,  
**Bondsmen** of our fears and hungers, fighting for  
our right to live ;—



We, who die, have dreams immortal, through  
our passing souls vibrate  
Passions older than the stars, and instincts of  
eternal fate ;—

We, who cannot comprehend, have god-like  
vision to behold  
Paths that we may never enter, secrets that to  
none are told.

Ours to read Earth's simple lessons ! When on  
wings of thought our flight  
Traverses the starry pathways, sweeps unfathomed  
voids of night,  
Enters realms of new creation, leaves their  
fading gleams behind,  
Lost in undimensioned spaces, — when unbounded,  
undefined,

Other vistas, farther deeps, beyond our weary  
flight extend,—

Each horizon a beginning, every path without  
an end,—

When, o'erawed and wonder-stricken, from that  
vastness we recoil,

Glad of narrow homely confines, glad of human  
love and toil,—

Be our faith in Earth our mother! Earth that  
tempers to our need

Forces of unfathomed Being, light too strong  
for us to read,

Lifting,—as she puts forth flowers that win  
their colour from the sun,—

Life within to life beyond her. Be our faith  
that both are one!

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Onward, and for ever onward, past our day of  
Love and Strife,  
Seasons of unending progress dawn through  
everlasting Life.

Backward through eternal ages, all we hope of  
the unseen,  
All the progress of the future, all that is to be,  
has been.

Ere we come, to-morrow waits us ;—when we  
see its light no more  
Yesterday abides for ever, neither after nor  
before.

Hope we of a timeless morrow life from death  
and change unyoked ?  
Lo ! a yesterday eternal shaped the law we ask  
revoked.

Hold we that eternal life shall make complete  
what now we miss?

Lo! its work is done already. Life eternal  
fashioned this.

Therefore let immortal visions flatter not with  
hope sublime

Those who find the harvest barren, reaping in  
the fields of time.

Ours to cherish mortal blossoms, ours a dying  
flame to tend,

Ours to build the wall that crumbles, ours to  
tread the paths that end ;—

Happy that in homely confines, sheltered from  
the vast and strange,

Change and Death have made us comrades :  
Be our faith in Death and Change !

Love that makes divine the human, deeds that  
else were left undone,  
Life inspires when Death confronts it. Be our  
faith that both are one !

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Still our questions are unanswered, still we seek  
at eventide  
Secrets that the morning promised, dreams that  
in the noonday hide.

We who scorned the Heaven we saw not : you  
who scorned the Earth you trod,—  
Have we found on Earth our kingdom ? Are  
you nearer to your God ?

Still above your path the heavens shine remote  
as over ours ;

Still Life's undeciphered meaning haunts us in  
the wayside flowers.

What has all our seeking taught us? What  
has been revealed to you,  
Save a purpose ever hidden, save an ever broken  
clue ?

Let us turn from the unfathomed. Let a faith  
that all may share  
Penetrate our common labours. Is not Life  
itself our care ?

'Twixt the mortal and immortal, Earth, our  
mother, is the bond ;  
Striving upward wrought she man, but leaves  
to him the step beyond.

Where she trusted shall we falter ?    Where she  
                  hoped shall we despair ?

Are we not to-morrow's keepers ?    Is not Life  
                  itself our care ?

Peradventure greater issues, grander ends than  
                  we can guess

Fall to ruins in our failure, stand complete in  
                  our success.

Ay ! though no divine fulfilment wait the  
                  labours we begin,

Ours be still the great adventure :—fighting, let  
                  us fight to win !

Be our faith in one another !    Something nobler  
                  than our best

Wakens in the trust of comrades, dawns on the  
                  united quest.

Be it ours to stand together ! ay, though by  
another name

We may call the God who leads you, is our  
pathway not the same ?

Through our day of strife and labour, toward  
the night when work can none,  
God be with you ! Love be near us ! Be our  
faith that both are one !

THE END

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